



r/HFY · Posted by u/optunny 10 hours ago

## We need to keep their monsters away from them. For both their sakes.

OC OC

When we met the Humans, we were tentative, cautious around them. We were different physically. They had rough, tight skin that they sweat out of to cool down. We were amphibious and needed moisture. Imagine our delight when they said we reminded them of one of their animals they called axolotls.

Naturally we helped them settle their first planet outside their solar system. When they arrived at a second we were there to finally produce a world we could both inhabit. They were practically offering to draw in asteroids to build us a planet before this. They did, incredibly, later on.

But we, I today, found out just how fond of other beings they could be. Even the fictional ones. Even the ones that would, in their own words, gut them like a fish.

It was movie night at the plaza. The workers at a steel mill had invited us slapfoots, an endearing term with no racist undertones, to watch a terrible horror movie. It was so old it had to be ported from magnetic tape to a giant laser disc, to a smaller disc, to digital. Oh, and their popcorn and slushies were fantastic. I'd have to ask later who this butter deity they keep referring to as Paula Deen was.

Anyway I was beside a younger woman. She still had her work clothes on giving me a noseful of sweat and slag. The butter and salt of my popcorn helped mask it so long as I kept it under my chin.

"Any idea what this is about?" I was told I was friendly by my patients. Whenever they came in with burns or, heavens help me, missing limbs usually in emergency ice chests my voice and friendly attitude helped them through their pain until the anesthetic did the rest. Why we required emergency ice chests for limbs still makes me queasy.

"Nah, but I hear it's terrible." Jones was on her nametag, right above the small screen where it flashed in tune with her heart. "An old monster flick. Not even in color." She smiled, mesmerizing me with a pair of silver canines.

"Wow." I'm not sure what I was more impressed by. How old this movie was or the want to have silver teeth myself. All we had was a hard jaw and gums. A sip of my slushie made me feel better.

The lights dimmed and a light shone on the far wall. There was a narration, a little murmuring and joking from the crowd still, then a hush as the title was announced dramatically. The Wolfman!

"Aw, hell yeah!" Jones excitedly muttered beside me.

I looked over and saw those silver canines glinting brighter than the rest of her white teeth. Now that she's smiling so wide I'm shocked to see the others have been filed down to points. I take another sip of my slushie, partly out of nervousness and partly out of jealousy as I tongue my toothless gums. I want a pretty smile too.

The movie started off like you would expect. Bad acting, old effects, small dots where the original film had been damaged in production. Man gets cursed and slowly turns into a monster.

When the first transformation happens I have to look back at Jones as her heart monitor flashed brighter. I almost wanted to ask her to maybe put her sleeve over it but the trained doctor in me was suddenly curious. It was flashing much higher than normal, possibly from fear. However, looking at her face, it most certainly was not fear.

She was leaned forward in her seat, one hand holding her chin up. I could see her front teeth clearly now, biting her bottom lip. Her skin was too dark to tell but I'm sure she would have been blushing. This was weird.

It didn't stop there, but it didn't, uh, escalate? Yes, that's the word. Frankly, she became more interesting than the Wolfman.

I slid my suit's helmet over my head at one point and trapped the smell of burnt slag and burnt popcorn together. Yuck. Darkening the visor the plaza became a cave with no echo as I accessed the local internet.

Whatever Jones was afflicted with was worrying me. Typing in her symptoms made me more worried. All that came up was, uh, a message saying my data history would be privately reviewed later. Well, she wasn't sick. Not physically, but I couldn't be sure if she would earn the same mental diagnosis.

Undoing my visor I'm relieved that she wasn't staring at me. I could just tell her I needed to moisturize my skin. The crews love it when I quote that one Hannibal Lecter film. I enjoy it as well.

The film is ending and now I'm the flustered one. I spent so much time... researching, yes, Jones's condition that the whole movie passed by. I was actually a little interested. There was a throaty giggle beside me and I saw Jones looking to the side, biting a finger, chortling.

"What's so funny?" I asked. Her heart had slowed now.

"It was just so bad." She snorted. Wetting her dry teeth she smiled again in a way that didn't show the tips of her teeth. "I mean, some scrawny guy with a bit of fake fur glued on? I'm surprised those teeth didn't fall out."

"Oh. The teeth, yes, that would be funny." I genuinely smiled but, feeling air brush over my gums, closed my mouth. Well, Jones smiled a little wider. Humans think axolotls yawning and smiling are adorable.

"Well, I have work tomorrow. Short shift though so I need rest."

As she got up to leave I acted without thinking. Reaching out a gently tugged on her sleeve. I was strong enough to hold down a grown man when necessary but now my arms felt so soft as my skin. The pull wasn't strong enough to send her to the ground but it got her attention.

"Uh, something you need, doc?" She had a brow raised, no eyebrow there, probably burned off unlike the other.

"I wanted to walk with you." Smooth as popcorn salt. When she raised her one eyebrow as well I elaborated. "I was just curious about your health. Nothing I suspect is life-threatening."

"O-kay. Sure." She nodded and, graciously, helped me up.

Making our way outside my suit slid a little lower on me as the cool air brushed over the mucus on my skin. That also meant it now pooled in my boots making a slapping sound. I think it's more of a sucking sound but the Humans always turned red, like Jones now that I think about it, whenever I propose we change slapfoot to footsucker. I'm not sure why but I've changed my opinion on the matter.

"I saw your heart rate increase." I opened the can of worms after we were out of earshot from the others. I figured this should be private, like any doctor patient meeting. Not that she was a patient. "I was curious as to what caused such a dramatic uptick."

"Uh, yeah, that..." She was biting her lip again and looking away. When her heart monitor sped up again she quickly slapped it off and gave me a very forced smile. "Just a little scared. Even that old movie had a good jumpscare or two."

I stared at her for a moment, my beady black eyes looking right into her white and brown ones. The smile faltered and she was rubbing her arm now. At this point we weren't walking anymore.

"I hope I did not overstep any boundaries, but given I did not know what was wrong with you I... looked up your visible symptoms during the film."

"Really?" It wasn't accusatory, thankfully, but her pupils had dilated and I could tell her ears were getting very hot. "What, uh, what's your diagnosis? Am I sick?"

I could tell she was hoping I'd say she has a fever but me wringing my hands was a dead giveaway. "No," I muttered. "I'll certainly have to make up some excuse to my supervisor later after viewing some, uh different materials."

"Oh." She nodded, wringing her hands now. It looks like we're having a race to see who can rub hand sanitizer into our skin the fastest.

"I'm not judging you, but I was just surprised that humans... find other, non-humans attractive." I shrugged and it helped to keep my hands apart. "I just wasn't sure what to make of it. The attraction, I mean."

"Oh, well," Jones, bless her heart which was probably racing, seemed to be thinking of a way to provide me an answer. Oh, good, she's not angry. ""It's, for me, it's like this attraction to... the wildness?"

"I assume you do not mean animals?" Alright, even I knew that was a taboo among humans. College was weird.

"Ew, no. No, no, no, no to infinity." She stuck her tongue out in a grimace and was able to smile. "Um, no it's more about the danger I guess? I mean, it's a monster."

Now this made perfect sense. "It's attractive for how threatening it is to your life?"

"Yeah. For me, atleast." She awkwardly rubbed the back of her neck, then in a move that still shakes me like jelly, cracked it. Ugh. "I mean, having those claws trailing over you and pricking you, reminding you that it's not a man holding you. Or, the growling and sharp teeth that could just turn you into dog chow at any moment."

I didn't have words to respond. As passionate as she was about it, as much as I understood what she meant, I was speechless. I must have been quiet too long as she suddenly looked down again. Oh, great, I've made this awkward.

"Is this fascination just relegated to this wolfman?" I think I already knew the answer.

"You mean werewolves? Nah." She waved a hand dismissively and I got to see all those teeth again. "Every monster humanity has cooked up has some person pining for 'em. Before we met you all aliens were on that list."

"What?" She really knew how to leave me speechless.

"Yeah." She nodded with a solemn expression on her face now despite the heat I could still feel radiating off her. "Didn't even have to be alive. Ghosts, zombies, inanimate objects. You name it we have a picture and stories."

Now it was my time to look at the ground. I felt like falling to my knees and just holding my head. This was all so unexpected.

"Y'know, doc," Jones's hand appearing around my shoulder kept me standing. "You got any secret interests like that? Some bogeyman you're not scared of?"

I looked up and saw her grinning. Those silver canines were really shining under the moonlight. I wonder if they're real silver?

"I'm not sure." No, I meant to say no. Where did that come from?

"Really? Could'a swore I saw you staring at my fangs every time we spoke."

I was caught dead to rights. Red handed. Hand in the cookie jar. No way to answer but to nod.

"If you want," Jones turned me around where we stood. I could see the last of the mill workers heading that same way to get some rest. "I could be your monster under the bed tonight?"

She really knew how to leave me speechless. Well, I'm not sure how I got into this situation but I won't deny I'm not curious. I do want to get another look at those pretty silver canines.

While we were sauntering towards the barracks, with Jones making more suggestive monster jokes, I'm reminded of something. Just a rumor heard around the other doctors I write to. Some new sentient species resembling bipedal canines. Now I remember where I heard werewolf before. Tightening my hand around Jones's I decided I could surprise her later. Maybe over lunch or popcorn? Popcorn sounds nice with extra butter.